

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 00643 280450Z

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6141

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FOR EA/EP IMUS AND GULICK

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, TN

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC - TONGA REQUEST FOR
MARKET STUDY

REF: A) STATE 104470, B) SUVA 566

1. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION RAISED REF A PARA 3, EMBASSY BELIEVES
PROPOSAL CLOSELY FOLLOWS RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN TONGA'S THIRD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CREATION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETS FOR TONGAN
PRODUCE. CASH FLOW FROM AGRICULTURAL SALES WOULD BE OF NET
BENEFIT IN FOLLOWING WAYS:

A) PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR HIGHER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION; TONGA'S
LAND IS REASONABLY FERTILE, AND INCOME FROM PRODUCE SALES WOULD
GENERATE FULLER AND BETTER USAGE OF THIS RESOURCE;

B) PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT FOR TONGA'S GROWING LABOR FORCE; THE THIRD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN INDICATED AT LEAST 1000 MORE SCCB MUST BE FOUND
IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR BETWEEN 1976 AND 1980;

C) MINIMIZE PRESSURES FOR MIGRATION; TONGANS MUST NOW GO OVERSEAS
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TO FIND PAID EMPLOYMENT, WHICH CREATES SEVERE HARDSHIPS, PARTICULARLY
BY SEPARATING FAMILIES OVER EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME;

D) ASSIST RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT BY ALLOWING TONGAN FARMERS
TO FINANCE PROJECTS ON THEIR OWN, RATHER THAN WAITING FOR ASSISTANCE
FROM THE GOVERNMENT;

E) LESSEN URBAN DRIFT TO NUKU'ALOFA FROM RURAL AREAS;

F) IN EVERY CASE FROM A THROUGH E, THE PROPOSAL WOULD BENEFIT THE POOREST SECTOR OF TONGA'S POPULATION, WHICH SUFFERS MOST IN TERMS OF LIVING WITH A LOW LEVEL OF SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM TONGA'S STAGNANT ECONOMY.

2. FEW OF TONGA'S NEEDIEST CITIZENS CAN BE CLASSIFIED IN WESTERN TERMS AS POVERTY STRICKEN SINCE THE TONGAN COMMUNAL STRUCTURE LOOKS

AFTER NEEDY RELATIVES. AS TONGA'S ECONOMY INEXORABLY SHIFTS FROM SUBSISTENCE TO A MIXED CASH ECONOMY, HOWEVER, MEANS MUST BE FOUND TO LESSEN THE IMPACT OF THE RESULTANT DISLOCATIONS. THE TONGAN GOVERNMENT SEES THE PRESENT PROPOSAL AS PROVIDING ONE ANSWER TO MINIMIZE THESE DISLOCATIONS BY GIVING INCENTIVES TO FARMERS TO STAY ON THEIR LAND. SIMILARLY THE PROVISIONS IN THE PROPOSAL FOR MARKET STUDIES ON HANDICRAFTS AND FISH EXPORTS WOULD HAVE DIRECT BENEFIT IN STABILIZING TRADITIONAL COTTAGE INDUSTRIES AND FISHING PRACTICES. THE PRESENT PROPOSAL IF IT WORKS WOULD HELP TO PREVENT THE CREATION OF A NEEDY CLASS THAT WOULD REQUIRE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF A MORE DIRECT FORM. FROM PERSPECTIVE WE GIVE THE PROPOSAL OUR STRONG RECOMMENDATION.
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